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Source: *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Spring, 1981), pp. 19-42

Published by: [University of California Press](http://www.jstor.org/stable/831033) on behalf of the [American Musicological Society](http://www.jstor.org/stable/831033)

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The Arabic Concept of Mode

By AMNON SHILOAH

I

THE SCHOLAR DESIROUS of thoroughly exploring the music of the Near East immediately encounters a number of complex problems. If he begins his investigation with the living musical traditions, assuming that the present day musics of the Near and Middle East are the descendants of the great musical tradition of the past, he faces certain grave obstacles. Since it is entirely transmitted by ear, the music of this enormous region does not provide us with any concrete musical document earlier than the first recordings, which were made at the beginning of this century.¹ Hence the difficulty of referring with any certainty to the sources from which the present traditions arose.

If we take the existence of general archetypes for granted, we must then consider the phenomenon of change, as well as the strong feeling for local features that characterizes the Near and Middle East. These two factors have most probably contributed to a departure, in various degrees, from any pre-established model. Moreover, contact with other cultures has radically affected Islamic music throughout its history. This is especially true in our century, during which modifications under modern pressures have been particularly striking. In order, then, to determine whether the different traditions at present extant in the greater part of the Near East should still be viewed as branches of the same tree, we ought to proceed to a vast enterprise of comparative studies. If this undertaking reaches a positive conclusion, we must then endeavor to trace the chain of events leading to the advent of the classical model and the subsequent splitting of the old classical music into the various local and regional styles.

The first part of such an investigation is comparatively easy to plan, but difficult to carry out. As to the second part, although the absence of musical documents makes it impossible to establish with any certainty what the music was like, we can, with a high degree of probability, clarify many fundamental questions by consulting the surviving

¹ See Ali Jihad Racy, "Record Industry and Egyptian Traditional Music 1904-1932," *Ethnomusicology*, xx (1976), 23-48.

theoretical sources and cautiously analyzing their contents. Indeed, we are fortunate enough to possess a comparatively large number of writings concerning music that extend from the ninth to the twentieth century.²

This enterprise faces other serious difficulties, however, which involve vagueness of definition, inconsistency in the use of a fluid terminology, and the likelihood of mistakes made by copyists who did not always understand what they were copying. Consequently, the scholar may easily be induced into error. For instance, a single wrong letter used to indicate a degree of a modal scale may lead to a chain of mistaken interpretations. Further, some of the theoretical texts are presented according to a common practice of the time, in the form of didactic poems. The poetic eloquence striven for in this type of writing usually renders the content even more obscure for a reader who is not entirely familiar with the style. The traps scattered in the path of the scholar also include the frequent omission of short vowel signs (which, in Arabic, mark basic grammatical inflections). This deficiency, as well as the total absence of punctuation, opens the way to various readings and consequently to different interpretations. Finally, it is obvious that any attempt to work from the sources must rest on a good command of the language, and that serious study in depth requires first-hand consultation and comparative study of as many manuscript documents as possible.

II

Since World War II, the exploration of Near Eastern music in general, and of its modal concepts in particular, has undergone a somewhat unusual development. If we look at the available studies that directly concern our subject, we observe an increasingly artificial separation between past and present. Many valuable studies concentrate on various aspects of the living music but concern themselves little with its possible links to the past. Other studies, which propose to survey the historical development, in most cases merely repeat dicta of the previous generation of scholars, usually without any attempt at re-evaluation. While the first approach is in itself legitimate and has in fact enriched our knowledge regarding some structural and concep-

² The majority of these writings is in Arabic, which is the language of science in the Muslim world. It should be emphasized, however, that not a few important treatises were written in Persian and even in Turkish. In this article the term Arabic is intended in a broad sense, to refer to these three languages of the Islamic world.

tual features of the living tradition of *maqāms* (modes), the second has reached a stage of stagnation.

Our period is also characterized by a certain indifference on the part of the potential consumers. There is very little reaction to what is being written. Few stimulating debates occur on problems that still await solutions based on secure foundations. In the 1920s the musicological world followed with lively interest the heated polemics between Kathleen Schlesinger and Henry George Farmer concerning the Arabic influence on Western music and musical thought.³ This public and published dispute of course had great influence and raised questions that are still open to discussion. What new ideas and theories of equally wide interest and broad repercussions have emerged in the last decades? The answer is not very encouraging. Scholars of the past generation aimed primarily to study, publish, and translate theoretical sources, to which they referred in their conclusions. All of them were aware of the need to discover new sources in order to increase their understanding of the subject. In the more recent literature, on the other hand, one often finds "facts" verified in a manner reminiscent of the anecdote reported by Jean Jacques Rousseau in his "Lettre sur la musique française":

Do you remember, sir, the story, told by M. de Fontenelle, of the Silesian infant who was born with a golden tooth? Immediately all the doctors of Germany exhausted themselves in learned disquisitions on how it was possible to be born with a golden tooth; the last thing that anyone thought of was to verify the fact; and it was found that the tooth was not golden.⁴

In this article I propose to verify some facts properly, by means of new theoretical evidence, and to place this evidence at the disposal of researchers. Within the past eight years or so, I have been fortunate enough to become acquainted with a large number of Arabic manuscripts concerning music, in many libraries, during the course of my

³ In 1925 Farmer published a monograph entitled "Clues for the Arabian Influence on Musical Theory," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1925), pp. 61–80; reissued as a pamphlet by Harold Reeves (London, February, 1925). These "clues" were refuted by Kathleen Schlesinger in her article "Is European Musical Theory indebted to the Arabs?" *Musical Standard* (2 and 16 May, 1925); also reissued as a pamphlet by Harold Reeves (London, 1925). There was reply and counter-reply, and finally, Farmer published a book: *Historical Facts for the Arabian Musical Influence* (London, 1930).

⁴ I quote the passage from the English translation in Oliver Strunk, ed., *Source Readings in Music History* (New York, 1950), p. 637.

work on a volume commissioned by RISM, and published in 1979 as part of Series B.⁵ For this book I have analyzed 341 different sources, which has made me aware of the unsatisfactory or unconvincing nature of some of the conclusions that have been reached concerning the historical development of the modal concept. Therefore, I feel obliged to set forth my reservations and thoughts on the matter, to stimulate further research on the basis of the newly discovered and described sources.

III

The interpretation of treatises that were already known, especially those translated into European languages, involves not only their contents, but also identification, authorship, and correct dating. The scholar who, for about half-a-century, dominated and determined our field of research, Henry George Farmer, cleared the way for us with tremendous ardor and tenacity; and, thanks to his numerous and important contributions, research in Arabic music was placed on the map of contemporary musicology. However, although he took full advantage of the known sources and contributed to the disclosure and publication of many new ones, given the circumstances in which he worked, certain errors were unavoidable. In his major early study, *A History of Arabian Music*,⁶ published in 1929 but written in the early 1920s, Farmer was hampered by the paucity of preceding studies and the dearth of known sources. Being aware of this handicap, he devoted much of his time and energy in subsequent years to filling the gap. The results of these efforts appeared in his book, *The Sources of Arabian Music*, published first in 1940 and reissued in 1965, a year after his death.⁷

In the introduction to this important volume, Farmer divided the history of Arabic music into four distinct periods: (1) the old Arabian School; (2) the Greek Scholiasts; (3) the Systematist School; (4) the Modern School. Then he adds:

It is with the first three only that this bibliography deals, and the year 1100 [A.H.]/1688 [A.D.] has been chosen as a suitable closing date, firstly because of the dearth of Arabic writers on the theory of music, and secondly, on account of the rise of the modern school shortly afterwards.⁸

⁵ Amnon Shiloah, *The Theory of Music in Arabic Writings (c. 900-1900): Descriptive Catalogue of Manuscripts of Europe and the U.S.A.*, RISM B, x (Munich, 1979).

⁶ Henry George Farmer, *A History of Arabian Music* (London, 1929).

⁷ Henry George Farmer, *The Sources of Arabian Music* (Bearsden, 1940); 2nd ed. (Leiden, 1965).

⁸ Farmer, *Sources*, p. x.

This division, and the detailed commentary that follows it, have been widely accepted and reproduced during the past two decades.

Let us now focus on a few details. Thanks to new discoveries, Farmer was able to push his closing date nearly four centuries beyond that of his *History*, which had stopped at the thirteenth century, with the official end of the Abbassid caliphate (1258). Farmer's decision to end the *History* with the thirteenth century had been determined by the rarity of significant theoretical writings after that date, a rarity usually ascribed to a decline of the music itself. Although Farmer included much more material from the later period in his *Sources*, basically he did not change his original view. Indeed, in the introduction to the volume he repeated his claim that "after the 7th–13th century, writers on the theory of music became fewer."⁹ Nor did he amend some obvious errors. One rather striking instance will suffice. Dealing, in his *History*, with the doctrine of the influence of music under the Abbassids, Farmer quoted a passage from the famous philosopher and music theorist Avicenna (980–1037) in order to illustrate one aspect, the correspondences between modes and particular ethical values:

Ibn Sīnā says that certain modes should be allocated to particular periods of the day and night. He says, "It behooves that the musician should tune the time of the false dawn (*subḥ al-kādbib*) with the [mode] *Rābāwī* . . ."

The rest of the correspondences for all twelve principal modes follows.¹⁰

In a footnote on the same page Farmer gave the following reference for the quotation from Avicenna: British Museum MS Or. 2361, fol. 201^v. Verifying the reference, I found it exact, but in a hand different from that of the body of the manuscript. The author of this interesting passage in fact died more than four hundred years after Avicenna himself. The work from which the passage actually comes, occupying folios 168 through 219 of the manuscript, was published by Rodolphe d'Erlanger in 1939, in French translation, under the title *Traité anonyme dédié au Sultan Osmanli*.¹¹

This work of course is listed in its own right in Farmer's *Sources* as Number 320, followed by the statement: "This treatise has neither a title nor the author's name."¹² Our discovery of a second manuscript

⁹ Farmer, *Sources*, p. xxiv.

¹⁰ Farmer, *History*, p. 197.

¹¹ Baron Rodolphe d'Erlanger, *La musique arabe*, iv (Paris, 1939).

¹² Farmer, *Sources*, pp. 62–63.

of the same work in the library of the Topkapi Saray has now made it possible to identify both the author and the work and to fill in a long lacuna in the British Museum version. The author's name is al-Mu'min al-Shirwānī and his work is entitled *Risāla fī 'ilm al-mūsīqī* (*Tract on the Science of Music*).¹³

Farmer's mistake, which involves a considerable period of time, might well blur our perspective, but there is a more general point to be made: by relying blindly and exclusively on him, one risks being led into error. Farmer's *History* is still the only work of its kind, fifty years after its appearance; more than that, it has been translated recently into Arabic to serve as a basic textbook for those who themselves possess treasures of sources buried in their libraries. Farmer's *Sources*, likewise, so far has remained the only authoritative catalogue, and has similarly received a recent Arabic translation, while the recommendations made by the International Congress of Arabic Music held in Cairo in 1932, "to draw up a list of the most important Arabic manuscripts which treat of music, showing those which have been published, and those which have been translated into another language,"¹⁴ have still not been implemented.

As a more general instance of the moribund state of scholarship in this area, consider the following. A standard dogma frequently stated in the recent literature concerns the achievements of Ṣafī al-dīn al-Urmāwī (d. 1292) and his recognized authority in subsequent generations. At the beginning of this century, Xavier Maurice Collangettes, a French musicologist and professor at the Faculty of Medicine in Beirut, opened the question in his enlightening "Étude sur la musique arabe."¹⁵ His arguments were entirely adopted by Farmer who quotes him in his *History*:

This author [Ṣafī al-dīn], says the late Professor Collangettes, "n'y invoque l'autorité ni des Grecs, ni des Persans. Il prétend bien faire oeuvre purement arabe. Ce qui n'empêche pas les mots persans d'y figurer à tout instant, surtout pour la désignation des modes. On s'est dégagé de l'influence grecque, mais pour subir celle de la Perse. Quels que soient du reste les éléments de ce style composite, l'oeuvre finale est sans contredit l'expression de l'art arabe au XIII^e siècle."¹⁶

¹³ See Shiloah, *The Theory*, pp. 332-34.

¹⁴ In the Congress of 1932, Farmer was appointed president of the commission on history and manuscripts. The recommendations of this commission stimulated him to undertake his work on the *Sources*.

¹⁵ Xavier Maurice Collangettes, "Étude sur la musique arabe," *Journal asiatique*, x^e série, IV (1904), 366-422; VIII (1906), 149-90.

¹⁶ Farmer, *History*, p. 202.

Emphasizing the Arabic element in Ṣafī al-dīn's theory, Farmer further remarks in his *Sources* that "Ṣafī al-dīn . . . was, after al-Fārābī, the greatest of the Arabic music theorists. In the Near and Middle East, he was looked upon as the fountainhead in this subject."¹⁷

Ṣafī al-dīn's achievements are associated in some more modern studies with the so-called darkness and intellectual decline between the thirteenth and nineteenth centuries. Two books published in French by Near Easterners in the 1970s, both entitled *La musique arabe*, accept the dogma of a long period of stagnation, but they view it as having begun even earlier than the thirteenth century, namely, in the tenth.¹⁸ One of the authors, Hassan Habib Touma, traces the beginning of the decline to a distinction between the tonal systems of Ṣafī al-dīn and his predecessor al-Fārābī. While the earlier system was of purely Arabic origin, the later one "relied on a form derived from the Pythagorean system—origin of the actual Turkish and Persian tonal systems." It was by departing from the purely Arabic tonal system "that the modern Arab theorists proceeded to the division of the octave into approximately twenty-four equal intervals."¹⁹

Leaving aside for the moment the question of the Modern School, Touma's argument, as it is formulated, seems precarious. Perhaps he had in mind the thesis developed by Farmer regarding the pre-Islamic scale of the *ṭunbūr al-baghdādī* described by al-Fārābī in his *Grand Book on Music*.²⁰ Farmer had cited this scale to counter Schlesinger's statement that until the conquest of Persia the Arabs had no system that they had been able to formulate as a theory.²¹ But Farmer himself, as we have said, recognized Ṣafī al-dīn as the greatest of Arabic theorists and the fountainhead of the subject. Indeed, all the sources uncovered so far support the conclusion that it was Ṣafī al-dīn's system that had the chief determinant impact on the generations that followed throughout the whole Middle Eastern region.

In these sources, the name of Ṣafī al-dīn is frequently cited as a supreme authority even when obvious deviations from his theory oc-

¹⁷ Farmer, *Sources*, p. xxiii.

¹⁸ See Simon Jargy, *La musique arabe* (Paris, 1971), p. 70, and Hassan Habib Touma, *La musique arabe* (Paris, 1977), p. 30 (originally published in German, Wilhelmshaven, 1975).

¹⁹ Touma, *La musique arabe*, pp. 30–31.

²⁰ French translation in d'Erlanger, *La musique arabe*, I (Paris, 1930), and II (Paris, 1935).

²¹ Farmer, *Historical Facts*, pp. 232–35.

cur. His *Kitāb al-adwār* (*Book of Cycles*)²² was analyzed and commented upon as a living theoretical tradition and circulated in a great number of copies, while al-Fārābī became a kind of legendary figure in the late literature, and what is said about him shows very little knowledge of his theory.

As we shall see later on, the far-reaching impact and popularity of the theory of Ṣafī al-dīn can be explained by its successful combination of different theoretical systems through the fusion of Arab and Persian elements.²³ Since the process of fusion may have started much earlier than the thirteenth century, it will be difficult to trace any specifics of the putative antique "Arabic tradition" in the post-thirteenth-century tradition. The situation may well be further clouded by the intrusion of local traditions, new as well as old.

As for the Modern School, here also we encounter certain confusions, not only as regards the basic definition of its characteristics, but also as regards its date of origin. For Farmer, as we have seen, it started shortly after 1100 [A.H.]/1688 [A.D.], the closing date of his *Sources*. Many other scholars consider Michael Meshaqa (1800-89) as its founder, because he introduced the division of the scale into twenty-four degrees, or intervals; he himself, however, did not claim this priority, saying rather that this division was taught him by his master al-Shaykh al-ʿAṭṭār (1764-1828), whom he criticized from a mathematical point of view.²⁴ Still others do not even regard this division as a distinct mark of the Modern School. Collangettes argues, for instance, that "the modern scale is not a tempered scale that derives its progression from $24\sqrt{2}$; it is the old scale of the thirteenth century to which have been added several small intervals."²⁵ This clear-sighted scholar who, it should be remembered, carried out his studies at the beginning of the century, with only a few sources at his disposal, fixed as the goal of his "modest work" the discovery of the bridges connecting the music of the past with modern music. Jules Rouanet, who wrote in the 1920s, continued in the same spirit and did not allow

²² French translation with an anonymous commentary in d'Erlanger, *La musique arabe*, III (Paris, 1938). This volume also contains a translation of another treatise by Ṣafī al-dīn, the *Risāla al-sharafiyya*. See also Eli Smith, "A Treatise on Arab Music, Chiefly from a Work by Mikhail Meshākah of Damascus," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, I (1849), 171-217.

²³ Owen Wright agrees with this interpretation. See his book, *The Modal System of Arab and Persian Music*, A.D. 1250-1300 (London, 1978), pp. 2 and 9.

²⁴ Shiloah, *The Theory*, pp. 64-66; 278-79.

²⁵ "L'échelle moderne n'est pas une gamme tempérée dont la progression aurait pour raison $24\sqrt{2}$; c'est la gamme antique du XIII^e siècle à laquelle on a ajouté quelques menus intervalles" (Collangettes, "Étude" [1904], p. 419).

himself to infer that our lack of sources necessarily indicated a decline. He could not believe "that in their various Eastern and Western kingdoms the Muslims had abruptly ceased to cultivate the arts."²⁶

I would like to conduct my argument along the same lines, but not before having briefly described the present situation with regard to the sources. The information included here is based on my RISM volume, which deals with Arabic writings concerning music in the libraries of Europe (including Istanbul) and the United States. The geographical limits of the volume imply, of course, that the list of possible sources is far from exhausted. Nevertheless, the data are fairly eloquent.

In the second edition of his *Sources*, Farmer listed 353 items, of which over sixty percent are accompanied by the indication NCK (no copy known), meaning that only 145 of the treatises he included have come down to us. Our RISM list comprises more than 600 items, of which 341 are available and have been analyzed. They are contained in 1,240 manuscripts (compared to 240 listed in Farmer's *Sources*), distributed among forty libraries. About a hundred of these treatises are of a theoretical nature, dealing directly or indirectly with the modal concept throughout the ages; and of these only a quarter has been published or translated into European languages. Significant to our discussion is the fact that eighty of the one hundred theoretical treatises were written between the thirteenth and nineteenth centuries, the so-called period of blackout or decline. In this respect, the statistics are even more impressive if we consider the whole production: about two-thirds of all the works on music listed in our volume belong to this period. As to the provenance of the theoretical writings: six are from Egypt; nine from Iraq; sixteen from Persia; eleven from Spain and North Africa; ten from Syria; seven from Turkey; and thirty-nine are of undetermined origin. Armed with these data we may, once and for all, discard the legend of decline, stagnation, or dearth of documents in the long period between the thirteenth and nineteenth centuries.

IV

In attempting to elucidate the process of the elaboration of art music, to determine the nature and provenance of its basic constituents,

²⁶ "Ce n'est pas, pourtant, que dans leurs divers royaumes d'Orient et d'Occident les musulmans aient brusquement cessé de cultiver les arts" (Jules Rouanet, "La musique arabe," *Encyclopédie de la musique* (Paris, 1922), première partie, v. 2747).

one encounters serious and sometimes insoluble difficulties. The scattered information available on the art music that crystallized after the advent of Islam is fragmentary, occasional, and often tendentious. Quite early we find claims for particularism and national supremacy, claims that accompany almost the very first writings on music to have come down to us, that is, from the tenth century. It should be remarked that similar claims were made concerning every cultural domain. In his work, *The Technique and Approach of Muslim Scholarship*, Franz Rosenthal comments on the struggle for political and cultural supremacy among the different groups:

The one extreme in this struggle was represented by the advocates of Arab intellectual supremacy. Their theory was based upon the assumption that the revelation which had been received by the Arab prophet [the Qur'ān] was the source of all true knowledge. The other extreme was represented by those who insisted upon the superior character of other civilizations, such as that of the Persians. . . . The fourth century [A.H./ 11th c. A.D.] saw the flourishing of the theory of *Eternal Wisdom* which opened the way for a reconciliation of the two extremes of intellectual nationalism. This theory maintained the essential oneness of all civilizations, as the natural consequence of the oneness of the human intellect.²⁷

Despite this idealistic theory, the delight in emphasizing particularism continued to exist and even exceeded national boundaries to become characteristic of the region. One is struck by the Eastern musician's extreme sensitivity to subtle nuances that he considers as distinct marks of local stylistic features. This sensitivity is closely related to the Oriental artist's fondness for the details composing a work; it is as if he were less concerned with a preconceived plan than with allowing the structure to emerge empirically from the details. This basic process seems to apply to the modal system throughout its evolution. Hence, despite manifold and significant variations, one may consider the many traditions from different locations and periods as branches of a single tree growing from the same roots. In other words, the historical development of the concept of mode can be viewed as the crystallization of a model originally embracing the maximum of common denominators, which later split into multiple local traditions.

Almost all the post-thirteenth-century theorists as well as mod-

²⁷ Franz Rosenthal, *The Technique and Approach of Muslim Scholarship*, Analecta orientalia, xxiv (Rome, 1947), 69-70.

ern scholars agree that Ṣafī al-dīn al-Urmawī codified the common elements of the modal practice as it was then known into a highly sophisticated system, and that his achievement became at once the chief model for subsequent generations. More than 250 years after his death, one of the numerous Arabic authors who constantly refer to his authority, al-Shirwānī (17th century)²⁸ wrote that Ṣafī al-dīn did not know the meaning or etymology of the names he had given to the modes; he had not found them in the books of the Ancients, but had borrowed them from practising musicians. This indicates the common belief that Ṣafī al-dīn's system reflected the practice of his own time and perhaps of remoter times as well. It also explains the popularity enjoyed by his two famous treatises, the *Kitāb al-adwār* and the *Risāla al-sharafiyya* among succeeding generations of theorists.²⁹

What possible links of kinship connected Ṣafī al-dīn's achievements with previous theories? From the little we know about the remote past we might speculate that the basic concept of a modal system could be traced back to the ancient Oriental civilizations. But such an hypothesis cannot be supported with convincing evidence, and it is only with the Sassanid tradition that we can begin to feel secure. This flourishing civilization, which vanished with the advent of Islam, has left traces of a sophisticated modal system, probably of the same nature as that which later evolved in the Muslim realm. Most of the information concerning Sassanid court music and its system has reached us indirectly, through Arab literature. But even though the information may be corrupt and mutilated, we cannot be mistaken about the existence of an organized modal system. References are to be found, for instance, in the monumental history, *The Golden Meadow*, by al-Mas'ūdī (d. 956) and in an important treatise on the 'ūd by al-Kindī (d. 870).³⁰ Both sources reproduce lists of corrupt names of modes and extol the excellence of the Persian modes.

The first serious information about a modal system in Arabic art music is provided by abū'l Faraj al-Isfahānī (d. 967) in his *Kitāb al-aghānī* (*The Book of Songs*). The author spent fifty years on this monumental work, collecting songs from the pre-Islamic period up to the ninth century. The book is a mine of information on music, musicians, musical life, and aesthetics. Several anecdotes indicate the pro-

²⁸ See Shiloah, *The Theory*, pp. 332-34.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ See Shiloah, "Un ancien traité sur le 'ūd-d'ibn Yūsuf al-Kindī," *Israel Oriental Studies*, IV (1974), 177-205.

found impact of Persian art music and, to a lesser degree, that of Byzantine music, on the newly established musical art that was then in process of elaboration. Many famous musicians of Persian extraction took an active part in this process. With our present knowledge, we cannot determine the extent of the influence of the Persian modal system, but it undoubtedly played an important role in the establishment of the new musical art, which developed both from pre-Islamic Arabic music and from the important contributions of the nations converted to Islam.

The modal system described in *The Book of Songs* is attributed to the greatest musician in the annals of Arabic music, Iṣḥāq al-Mawṣilī (d. 850). His modal theory became known as the theory of *aṣābiʿ* (fingers, s. *iṣbaʿ*) and *mājarī* (courses, s. *majrā*) because it is related to the frets of the *ʿūd* and the corresponding fingers. Consequently, the notes used in a scale receive the names of the fingers used in producing them. In the indications that introduce the songs in *The Book of Songs* the relevant string is given, together with the finger (*iṣbaʿ*) corresponding to the main degree of the modal scale; the course (*majrā*) then designates one of the three kinds of thirds, the major, minor, or neutral (possibly first introduced by Zalzal, Iṣḥāq al-Mawṣilī's uncle and teacher). Occasionally the name of a corresponding rhythmic mode is added. This indication of the modal pattern frequently appears above the song, an *aide-memoire* that provided the performer with full information about the modal scale.³¹ This system allowed for twelve fundamental modes which, in later times, became known by fanciful names. To these were later added other modes of a more complex nature. An elaborated theory of *aṣābiʿ* is still to be found in two fifteenth-century treatises, one by ibn al-Ghaybī,³² the other by al-Lādhīqī,³³ where they co-exist with the more complex system codified by Ṣafī al-dīn al-Urmawī.³⁴

³¹ This system is fully described in Henry George Farmer, "The Song Captions in the Kitāb al-aghānī al-kabīr," *Transactions of the Glasgow University Oriental Society*, xv (1953-54), 1-10.

³² This theory is described in two of ibn Ghaybī's works, *Jāmi' al-alḥān*, and *Maqāṣid al-alḥān*; both are still in manuscript. See Shiloah, *The Theory*, pp. 171-74.

³³ See d'Erlanger, *La musique arabe*, iv (Paris, 1939).

³⁴ Although the "Andalusian" modal system of the Maghrib seems to have developed features of its own, far from the Eastern region, I do not fully accept Wright's conclusion that "North Africa and Spain must be excluded from the regions for which the hypothesis of unity may be entertained" (*The Modal System*, p. 7). For a discussion of this matter, see the appendix below.

V

As has been noted, Ṣafī al-dīn's theory enjoyed immediate success and wide acceptance; soon after its appearance it became an authoritative model, which subsequent generations of theorists regarded with respect. Its far-reaching impact had two main causes: (1) for the first time in the history of Arabic theory, an author had provided a systematization of the most essential elements observed in the modal practice of his own period, while at the same time taking advantage of earlier theoretical achievements; (2) the theory was so formulated as to leave room for possible expansions and variations.

Ṣafī al-dīn's two major treatises, the *Kitāb al-adwār* and the *Risāla al-sharafiyya*, are available in French translation by d'Erlanger, although in this translation the text of the former work is actually incorporated in the so-called *Mubārak Shab Commentary*, one of the three commentaries known to us.³⁵ As usual in commentaries of this sort, phrases, and sometimes fragments of phrases, are isolated and systematically commented upon, producing a text that in this case is almost triple the length of the original treatise.³⁶ Ṣafī al-dīn's theory has been well summarized and analyzed by several scholars, including Owen Wright,³⁷ Liberty Manik,³⁸ and Collangettes.³⁹ Nevertheless, for a better orientation in the following discussion, I shall begin by singling out a few of its essential points.

The first involves Ṣafī al-dīn's contribution to the correction and definition of the mobile degrees in the general scale that serves as the foundation of his modal exposition. The mobile degrees involve some semitones, thirds, and steps larger than a semitone but smaller than a tone. All of his calculations and demonstrations were based on the division of a monochord, or referred to the five strings of the *ʿūd*, an approach already used by all of his predecessors. Ṣafī al-dīn followed in the footsteps of previous Arab theorists in describing the octave as the sum of two conjunct tetrachords plus an interval of a tone; or a combination of a tetrachord plus a pentachord. His calculations based on diverse divisions of the monochord led him to the establishment of three subdivisions within every 9/8 tone (204 cents), equalling two limmas (90 cents each) and a comma (34 cents). Thus, his tetrachord

³⁵ See above, n. 22.

³⁶ For further details, see Shiloah, *The Theory*, pp. 175 and 418–20.

³⁷ Wright, *The Modal System*, Part I.

³⁸ Liberty Manik, *Das arabische Tonsystem im Mittelalter* (Leiden, 1969), pp. 94–

121.

³⁹ Collangettes, "Étude," (1904), pp. 399–401; (1906), pp. 153–60.

included eight degrees and his octave eighteen. Each degree was designated by a letter of the *abjad* alphabet:⁴⁰

TABLE I

A	B	J	D	H	W	Z	Ḥ	Ṭ	Y	YA	YB	YJ	YD	YH	YW	YZ	YḤ
g	a ^b	a ^g *	a ^ḥ	b ^b	b ^ḥ	b ^ḫ	c	d ^b	d ^ḥ	d ^ḫ	e ^b	e ^ḥ	e ^ḫ	f	g ^b	f [#]	g

*ḥ = natural degree lowered by a comma

Ṣafī al-dīn went on to classify all the intervals into two main categories: the large (octave, double octave, fourth, fifth, octave plus fourth, octave plus fifth); and the small (the tone and smaller steps), called intervals of modulation, or melodic intervals. These latter were designated by T (for a tone); J (limma + comma); and B (limma).

Taking into account certain established rules such as the non-admittance of three successive limmas,⁴¹ Ṣafī al-dīn obtained seven manners of dividing the fourth, or seven tetrachord species (e.g., TTB, TBT, BTT . . .), and twelve for the fifth, or pentachord species (e.g., TTBT, TJJT . . .). A scale can be constituted by the combination either of similar or different genera (*ajnās*, s. *jins*).⁴² From combinations of tetrachords and pentachords, the tetrachord invariably being placed below, eighty-four octave scales (*adwār* s. *dawr*) are derived by combination and permutation. These *adwār* are described in detail by Ṣafī al-dīn, who adds that since not all of them are consonant only some of them found favor in practice.⁴³ Among the latter are the twelve *shudūd* (s. *shadd*; later called *maqāmāt* [s. *maqām*] *anghām* [s. *naghma*], *alḥān* [s. *laḥn*] . . .). These twelve modal scales, which probably by then already also implied specific patterns and other characteristics besides intervallic structure, are identified by proper names

⁴⁰ *Abjad* is the first of the eight mnemotechnical terms into which the twenty-eight consonants of the Arabic alphabet were divided.

⁴¹ The entire list of inadmissible successions is to be found in *Kitāb al-adwār*. See d'Erlanger, *La musique arabe*, III, 287-89.

⁴² Arabic theorists use the term *jins* (pl. *ajnās*), borrowed from the Greek γένος, to denote the tetrachord, whose three basic classes are called in Arabic *qawī* (diatonic), *lawnī* (chromatic), and *rāsīm* (enharmonic). The various kinds of intervallic distribution within each general type of tetrachord are called *anwāc* (s. *nawc*), meaning "species"; twelve species of the pentachord are also treated by theorists, eleven of them produced by adding a whole step to a tetrachord. Ṣafī al-dīn also designated a special category of "unique species" (*ajnās mufrada*) to cover species not conforming to the normal patterns. These comprise tetrachords that do not extend to the perfect fourth, tetrachords including more than four scale degrees altogether, and pentachords not divisible into perfect fourth plus whole step.

⁴³ See d'Erlanger, *La musique arabe*, III, 337-43.

such as *ushshāq*, *nawā*, *rāst*, probably borrowed from practice. These twelve *shudūd*, augmented by six secondary modal scales called *awāzāt* (s. *awāz*), which also possessed proper names, became the central corpus of the system.

In addition, according to Ṣafī al-dīn, some other modes were used in practice that did not receive proper names, and these are designated by a general name: *murakkabāt* (s. *murakkab*)—compound modes. This implies the possibility of multiple combinations derived from the principal *shudūd* and *awāzāt*, because such derivations are potentially included in one of the basic principles of the whole system. This determining principle concerns the conception of a whole range or scale as the sum of accumulated smaller elements, which also permits the mobility and permutation of these elements within the framework of the resulting extended range. The genera (*ajnās*) of notes—small collections of three to five adjacent pitches—can be similar or dissimilar; they can be transposed as well as on their normal degrees in the general scale. In brief, the process is a kind of mosaic composition of multiple combinations out of relatively minimal means.

This principle might have caused difficulty in distinguishing between the *shudūd* and the *murakkabāt*, as we gather from Ṣafī al-dīn's own rhetorical questioning of why his system fails to call the *rahāwī* (one of the *shudūd*) a *murakkab*, since it is composed of two genera, those of *nawrūz* and *ḥijāzī* [i.e., it is compound].⁴⁴ Although he himself does not answer this question, a later, anonymous commentator explains that the application of simple identifying names to compound modes obviates the need to call them by compound names. He himself finds no difficulty in the question if "we admit that the above mentioned genera are effectively present in the cited cycles."⁴⁵ In other words, the principle of combining genera is permanent and undeniable; it has nothing to do with the criteria for selection of the principal *shudūd* and *awāzāt*. As a matter of fact, many *murakkabāt* did receive independent proper names of their own in the course of time.

It is also evident that, quite early, we encounter another important peculiarity, whereby the same name designates both a genus and a larger combination in which the genus occurs along with similar or other genera. This principle was also extended to the names of the degrees in the general scale on which the modal scales or the original genera usually repose.

Thus, the greatness of Ṣafī al-dīn's theory lies in its codification

⁴⁴ See d'Erlanger, *La musique arabe*, III, 387–88.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

and conceptualization of essential elements observed in practice as well as its establishment of a classification that distinguishes between the principal and secondary modes, that is, between the most favored ones and general category of *murakkabāt*. The category of *murakkabāt* allows for the expansion of the category of principal and secondary modes and offers diverse possibilities for transformation within the system.

VI

Not long after Ṣafī al-dīn's death in 1291, the first substantial deviation from his theory appeared, although its spirit was faithfully preserved. At least two theorists of the immediately subsequent period provide us with a different method of classifying the twelve *shudūd* and six *awāzāt*. The first, ibn al-Akfānī,⁴⁶ was a physician, encyclopedist, and mathematician who was born and raised in Sindjār (ancient Singara) and died in Cairo in 1348. His encyclopedia *Irshād al-qāsīd* (*The Guiding of the Searcher*), contains a section on the science of music where Ṣafī al-dīn's list of *shudūd* and *awāzāt* is reproduced with only one variant. In a revision of this encyclopedia, called *Al-durr al-naẓīm* (*The Well-Arranged Pearls*), which is attributed to the original author, we find a different arrangement agreeing with that of the second theorist, al-Khaṭīb al-Irbilī (see Table II). The latter was probably from Irbil (Iraq), not far from the birthplace of ibn al-Akfānī. Al Khaṭīb al-Irbilī wrote his didactic poem, *Jawābir al-niẓām* (*The Well-Ordered Jewels*), in 1329,⁴⁷ mentioning, successively, Ṣafī al-dīn's classification and that of ibn al-Akfānī. About four centuries later, al-Qādirī referred to the authority of ibn al-Akfānī as "representative of the new trend in the science of music."⁴⁸ It is evident, then, that the work of ibn al-Akfānī and al-Khaṭīb al-Irbilī represented a new tradition, which spread rapidly, mainly over the area west of Persia. This tradition, which derived its system from Ṣafī al-dīn's theory, prevailed up to the middle of the eighteenth century. The same tradition is also represented in the Persian sources of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

In this new tradition, the classes of *shudūd*, *awāzāt*, and *murakkabāt*

⁴⁶ See Amnon Shiloah, "Deux textes arabes inédits sur la musique," *Yuval*, 1 (1968), 221-48; also, Shiloah, *The Theory*, pp. 146-50.

⁴⁷ Published by Sheikho in *al-Masbriq*, xvi (1913), 895-901, and by al-^cAzzāwī, in *al-mūsīqā al-ʿirāqīyya* (Baghdad, 1951), pp. 106-113.

⁴⁸ See Shiloah, *The Theory*, pp. 240-41.

are retained, but they are presented in a different way. According to some later authors, such as al-Mārdīnī (d. 1406), the new classification denotes the difference between the Persians and the Arabs. Yet a contemporary of al-Mārdīnī, who wrote in Persian, °Abd al-Qādir ibn Gaybī (d. 1435),⁴⁹ adheres to the new tradition but also provides variations that associate him more than the others with Ṣafī al-dīn's classification.

In the new classification the twelve *shudūd* are split into four *uṣūl* (principals) and eight *furūc* (branches, s. *far*^c). The latter are treated as derivations: two branches for each principal. Among the four principals, absolute primacy is given to the *rāst*, henceforth designated as the first, the head, the most complete, the central, and the fountain of all the *anghām* (s. *naghma*; a generic name for all the modal skeletons). The four principals plus their eight branches are most often called *maqāmāt*, but also *shudūd*, *alḥān*, *uṣūl*, *bardāwāt*, *hunūk* or *abnāk* (s. *bank*). Eleven of the twelve terms in Ṣafī al-dīn's nomenclature were kept; the twelfth, *ḥijāzī*, was moved to the class of *awwāzāt* and replaced by *māyā*, one of Ṣafī al-dīn's *awwāzāt*. The *awwāzāt* otherwise retain Ṣafī al-dīn's names, but they are now considered as derivatives of the twelve *maqāmāt*; each *awwāz* is assigned to a pair of principal *maqāmāt* from parts of which it is deemed to be composed.

To show the transition from Ṣafī al-dīn's classification to the new one, which becomes common to all authors in the following generations up to the eighteenth century, we give here three samples of *maqāmāt* classification: (1) Ṣafī al-dīn's list of *shudūd*; (2) the *bardāwāt* classification as it occurs in ibn al-Akfānī's *Al-durr al naẓīm*,⁵⁰ which distinguishes between four *uṣūl* (principals) and eight *furūc* (branches); (3) a relatively late list of twelve *maqāmāt* provided by al-Muslim al-Mawṣilī (b. 1712),⁵¹ significantly different from Ṣafī al-dīn in contents as well as in ordering (see Table II).

As to the *awwāzāt*, each *awwāz* in Ṣafī al-dīn's list is assigned in the new system to a pair of corresponding *maqāmāt*; but here, the variations between the different authors are more important than in the *maqāmāt* classification. Table III gives two samples in addition to the list of *awwāzāt* provided by Ṣafī al-dīn.

So far, for this part of the theory, the views of the different authors are more or less in agreement. According to the anonymous author of

⁴⁹ See above, n. 32.

⁵⁰ See above, n. 46.

⁵¹ See Shiloah, *The Theory*, pp. 287–88.

TABLE II

Şafî al-dîn: <i>şbudūd</i>	Ibn al-Akfānî: <i>bardāwāt</i>	al-Muslim al-Mawşilî: <i>maqāmāt</i>
	<i>uṣūl</i>	related <i>furūc</i>
1. ^c ushshāq	1. rast $\begin{cases} \text{cushshāq} \\ \text{zangulā} \end{cases}$	1. rast
2. nawā	2. ^c irāq $\begin{cases} \text{māyā} \\ \text{abūsalik} \end{cases}$	2. ^c ushshāq
3. abūsalik	3. iṣfahān $\begin{cases} \text{nawā} \\ \text{ḥusaynī} \end{cases}$	3. ^c irāq
4. rast	4. zīrāfkand $\begin{cases} \text{buzurg} \\ \text{rahāwī} \end{cases}$	4. ḥijāz
5. ^c irāq		5. zankulā
6. iṣfahān		6. mukhālīf
7. zīrāfkand		7. abūsalik
8. buzurg		8. shahnāz
9. zangulā		9. ḥusaynī
10. rahāwī		10. muqābil
11. ḥusaynī		11. nawā
12. ḥijāz		12. nawrūz

TABLE III

Şafî al-dîn: <i>awāzāt</i>	al-Mārdīnī (d. 1406): ⁵² <i>awāzāt</i> corresponding <i>maqāmāt</i>	al-Ḳādirī (17th century?): ⁵³ <i>awāzāt</i> corresponding <i>maqāmāt</i>
1. kuwasht	1. nawrūz $\begin{cases} \text{rast} \\ \text{cirāq} \end{cases}$	1. nawrūz $\begin{cases} \text{buzurg} \\ \text{zīrāfkand} \end{cases}$
2. kardānya	2. shahnāz $\begin{cases} \text{iṣfahān} \\ \text{zīrāfkand} \end{cases}$	2. shahnāz $\begin{cases} \text{ḥusaynī} \\ \text{ḥijāz} \end{cases}$
3. salmak	3. salmak $\begin{cases} \text{cushshāq} \\ \text{zangulā} \end{cases}$	3. salmak $\begin{cases} \text{rahāwī} \\ \text{zangulā} \end{cases}$
4. nawrūz	4. ḥijāz $\begin{cases} \text{māyā} \\ \text{abūsalik} \end{cases}$	4. kuwasht $\begin{cases} \text{cirāq} \\ \text{iṣfahān} \end{cases}$
5. māyā	5. zarkishī $\begin{cases} \text{nawā} \\ \text{ḥusaynī} \end{cases}$	5. māyā $\begin{cases} \text{nawā} \\ \text{abūsalik} \end{cases}$
6. shahnāz	6. kuwasht $\begin{cases} \text{buzurg} \\ \text{rahāwī} \end{cases}$	6. kardānya $\begin{cases} \text{rast} \\ \text{cushshāq} \end{cases}$

Kitāb al-mizān (*The Book of Precision*),⁵⁴ however, there was a divergence of opinion even concerning the *awāzāt*, which affected both names and structures. If this is so, the situation becomes much more complicated when we get to the category of *murakkabāt* (compound modes), which are also called *shawādhāt* (s. *shawādh*), *shu'ab* (s. *shu'ba*), and *tarākīb* (s. *tarkīb*). Their number, which varies, according to dif-

⁵² See Shiloah, *The Theory*, pp. 275–78.

⁵³ See Shiloah, *The Theory*, pp. 240–41.

⁵⁴ See Shiloah, *The Theory*, pp. 394–98.

ferent sources, between five and twenty-five, is most frequently given as twenty-four. Whatever the number of these modal combinations, they are always provided with proper names, such as *ḥiṣār*, *nabaft*, or *ʿushayrān*. Diversity is the prevailing feature of this category, possibly an indication of the existence of local traditions.

Confirmation of this hypothesis may be found in scattered remarks implying that the same modal scale or skeleton can be known by various names in different places, and that the same name can be assigned to two different modal scales or skeletons in different places. Al-Shirwānī (15th-century) informs us, for instance, that in Iraq the *isfabān maqām* is called *mukbālif*.

Certain descriptions of the *shuʿab* (or *murakkabāt*) imply that they are not complete or independent modes, but rather serve towards the elaboration of the principal modes with which they have affiliations; they are often used to extend the range of the mode to which they are annexed. Al-Ṣafadī (16th century) classifies the *shuʿab* into upper and lower, indicating two methods of using them in the development of the *maqām*. One consists of starting with the appropriate low *shuʿba* under the *finalis* of the *maqām* and then passing to the development of the *maqām* itself. The other directs starting with the chief genus of the *maqām* and then, for the sake of elaboration, passing to the related *shuʿba*.⁵⁵

It follows from the last remark that each *maqām* has a defined range and tessitura. According to the sources, the particular range and tessitura are determined in relation to the central scale or *rāst*. The seven degrees of this scale are designated by the generic name *buḥūr* and individually by their proper names, which are Persian ordinal numerals: *yekāb* (the first place), *dūgāb*, *segāb*, *chahārgāb*, *penjgāb*, *sheshgāb*, *bāftgāb*. The octave is called the reply [*jawāb*] of *yekāb*, this latter name often being replaced by the term *rāst*; as to other degrees underneath the *yekāb*, the term “low reply” is used. Here and there, as with *rāst*, other names of *maqāmāt*, such as *ʿirāq* and *busaynī*, became associated with degrees serving as their determined point of departure, and replaced the ordinal numerals as names for the scale degrees. Some isolated treatises offer different nomenclature. One of them is that of al-Ḥaṣkafī (16th century); he begins with the fourth below the first: *al-asfal* (the lowest), and proceeds to *al-dhīl* (the low), *al-rukn* (the base), *al-awwal* (the first), *al-thānī* (the second), *al-thālith* (the third), *al-rābiʿ* (the fourth), *al-khāmis* (the fifth), *al-tāzī* (the vibrating? or the Arabic?),

⁵⁵ For further details, see Wright, *The Modal System*, Chap. 8.

al-ʿuluw (the high), *al-intibā* (the end). The range of eleven degrees prescribed by al-Ḥaṣḥafī is not an isolated example, for it occurs frequently in other sources as well; consequently, it may indicate the optimal range of a *maqām*.

It should be remembered that all the technical information in the treatises is either completely verbal or else utilizes alphabetical symbols. There is one exception, however: the rudimentary notation of al-Dhabīb al-Ṣaydāwī (15th century).⁵⁶ This author uses an eight-line staff of different colors and places the names of the degrees between the lines. He also provides symbols to indicate the notes of departure and *finalis* as well as the direction of the melody, but he contents himself with guiding contours.

One feature common to all the sources up to the nineteenth century is their concern with specifying the multiple affiliations of the *maqāmāt* and *awāzāt* to ethical and cosmological values. The detailed list of correspondences involves such categories as the planets, signs of the zodiac, seasons, day and night, hours, elements, humours, temperaments, virtues, classes of men, colors, odors, raw materials, alphabetical letters, and poetry and poetical meters. These multiple correspondences were considered important to the musician, who was expected to select the appropriate mode for each circumstance. They were also useful to the physician, enabling him to administer the suitable treatment for each disease. Moreover, we are told that each human being has his own melody, which agrees with his nature and horoscope; friendships are also based on similar affinities.

At this point, let us summarize the major characteristics of the modal system described thus far:

(1) The modal scale is basically conceived as a combination of several small groups of notes, whether of the same intervallic structure or not, called "genera" (*ajnās*, s. *jins*).

(2) In many cases one genus is sufficient to give the feeling of a given mode.

(3) A genus as well as the entire scale in which that genus is predominant are frequently designated by the same name.

(4) As a result of characteristic (1), many combinations can be created theoretically, but only a limited number has been admitted or commonly accepted.

(5) Among the latter, a certain hierarchy exists; first we find *rāst*, followed by the other principal *maqāmāt*, then the six *awāzāt*, then the

⁵⁶ See Shiloah, *The Theory*, pp. 83–85.

shuʿab, or *murakkabāt*, which, practically speaking, are partial or subordinated patterns.

(6) Part of the modal scale is linked to a definite pitch level that is determined by relation to the general scale; it also evolves within a given segment of the general scale.

(7) A group of notes transposed is considered to be a different entity and consequently may receive a new name.

(8) Intervallically identical groups are considered different when they do not have the same point of departure, although they may repose on the same *finalis*.

(9) Two intervallically identical groups may be considered different even when they have the same departure and *finalis* if one is ascending and the other descending, or if they emphasize different scale degrees.

(10) Beyond these common points, a significant part of the system has always been subject to local and, to a certain extent, personal interpretation. We can also assume that from the beginning the widely accepted theoretical principles were adapted to various local styles.

VII

In the light of what has been said so far, we can now turn our attention to the so-called Modern School. This is characterized by the use of a general scale extending to two identical octaves divided into twenty-four degrees. Like its counterpart in the past, the basic scale within this general scale is that of *rāst*. The terminology used to designate the principal degrees of the modern scale comprises some ordinal numerals as well as some names that correspond to the ancient names of *maqāmāt*, *awāzāt*, and *shuʿab*. Though a certain hierarchy among the *maqāmāt* or *anghām* is still implied in common practice, the ancient categorization has vanished in the Turco-Arabic sphere; in Persian music, however, it still applies. The Syrian theorist Michael Allawerdi, in a book published in Arabic in 1950, offers an interesting explanation of the process leading to the fusion of the *awāzāt* and *shuʿab* into the main *maqāmāt*.⁵⁷ Following in the footsteps of past theorists, he describes the *awāzāt* and *shuʿab* as subordinate elements used to amplify and enrich the principal *maqāmāt*. They were introduced in the course of historical development, either in the middle, on secondary centers, or at the extremities of the scale of one or another *maqām*. Little by little they became assimilated into their new envi-

⁵⁷ Michael Allawerdi, *The Philosophy of Oriental Music* (Damascus, 1950).

ronments, losing their independent existence.⁵⁸ The merged entities, in their diverse combinations, constitute the repertoire now in use. It should be emphasized that these combinations offer possibilities for different modulatory progressions. Elsewhere in the same book, Allawerdi rejects the attribution of the division of the octave into twenty-four degrees to Michael Meshaqa, correctly remarking that the division had been known previously.⁵⁹

Finally, modern theorists class all modal scales according to their points of departure, which coincide with the degrees of the central scale. Thus they speak of *maqāmāt* reposing on the degree *yekāb*, on the degree *‘ushayrān*, and so on. The basis of such a classification can be found in the sources of recent centuries. Undoubtedly, the nineteenth- and twentieth-century theorists have interpreted the modal system as it is reflected in their own countries of origin. Nevertheless, we may assume that, like their colleagues in past generations, they did not deviate from the essence and spirit of that tradition whose theory was formulated by Ṣafī al-dīn.

In his definition of mode according to the teaching of the modern masters, d'Erlanger mentions five essential elements:⁶⁰

- (1) the ambitus or range of the modal scale
- (2) the constituent genera of the scale (*ajnās*)
- (3) the point of departure (*mabda‘*)
- (4) the momentary or secondary stopping points (*al-marākiz*)
- (5) the final point of repose or tonic (*al-qarār*)

These elements are strikingly similar to the modal characteristics discussed earlier with reference to sources ranging from the thirteenth to the eighteenth century. Between these two sets of characteristics run the threads that link the past to the present. In the practice of today one can observe that in most cases the basic modal scales are composed of a mixture of genera still called *tarākīb* (s. *tarkīb*), whose centers are systematically worked out and emphasized in different ways. A skilled musician distinguishes himself by excelling in the modulatory progressions that allow him to move away from and back to the main *maqām*, more or less according to a plan or plans admitted by tradition.

⁵⁸ Allawerdi, *The Philosophy*, p. 344.

⁵⁹ Allawerdi, *The Philosophy*, p. 193.

⁶⁰ D'Erlanger, *La musique arabe*, v, *Essai de codifications des règles usuelles de la musique arabe moderne* (Paris, 1949), p. 100.

VIII

My principal aim in this article has been to re-evaluate some common opinions regarding the historical development of the concept of mode in the Middle East. In this reconsideration of the matter I have been guided by the numerous treatises written between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries. It has become clear from this short survey that, contrary to previous assumptions, there is no lack of theoretical writings during this time span: the period is not characterized by decline or stagnation as far as musical theory is concerned. On the contrary, the numerous treatises dealing with mode seem to reflect, much more than in earlier periods, a living theoretical tradition; drawing, in all probability, upon actual and active musical experience, these writings are authentic witnesses to the evolution of the modal concept through time and space. A thorough examination of the sources, whether known but unpublished, or still buried somewhere in one of the numerous libraries as yet untouched, will probably reveal considerable information about the formation of local styles and offer a better understanding both of their uniqueness and of their affinities with other local traditions.

The documents are difficult to interpret; the terminology used in them is ambiguous. They require long and thorough examination before definite statements can be made. Our survey has aimed to offer an overview of the whole period, from the thirteenth through the eighteenth century; in so doing, it has revealed that a certain continuity of spirit and principles characterized the concept of mode throughout the period and in the entire area of the Middle East, and this includes the Modern School which, at least in its beginnings, did not show any radical reversion to traditional music, but continued to develop along the major lines established by past generations. We should endeavor to become aware of the chain of events revealed by the sources. It would then become easier to understand what real changes are occurring in present day traditions.

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APPENDIX

In dealing with the development of the modal concept in the first centuries of Islam, we ought also to take into consideration the case of the so-called Andalusian tradition of the North African Maghrib. A famous and outstanding musician named Ziryāb (9th century) is said to have gone from

Bagḥḥad to Cordoba in Spain, where he became the chief musician of the Caliph al-Ḥakam and the recognized founder of the Andalusian school of music. This artist is credited with several novelties: the development of the local *nawba*, or *nūba* (a suite form), and the creation of the system of twenty-four *nawbāt*, which are said to correspond to twenty-four modal scales and to possess a whole range of cosmological affiliations. After the expulsion of the Muslims from Spain in 1492, this tradition was transported to North African centers where it partially survived: that is to say, only eleven of the twenty-four *nawbāt* remained in the living tradition, thanks to the efforts of the musician al-Ḥā'ik. Who was al-Ḥā'ik and why did he reduce the number of *nawbāt* to eleven? What possible kinship exists between the Andalusian *nawba* and its Oriental counterpart?

Rafael Mitjana ("L'Orientalisme musical et la musique arabe," *Le monde oriental*, I [1906], 184–221) claimed, without any supporting evidence, that when the last Arabs left Spain and took refuge in the Maghrib, a famous musician named al-Ḥā'ik piously collected the traditional songs, and to make them more accessible, reduced the number of *nawbāt* from twenty-four to eleven. Farmer (in *An Old Moorish Lute Tutor* [Glasgow, 1933], and elsewhere) repeated Mitjana's tale verbatim. Alexis Chottin (*Corpus de la musique marocaine* [Paris, 1931]), agreed that the anthology of eleven *nawbāt* was compiled by al-Ḥā'ik, but not until 1792, that is, three hundred years later. Touma, in his brief discussion of the question, proposes a choice of dates as well as a particular point of view regarding the origin of the *nawba*: "La musique andalouse qui subsiste aujourd'hui, ainsi que la tradition vocale d'Afrique du Nord, sont les héritières de cet art musical introduit par Ziriyāb à Cordoue aux XIII^e, XV^e et XVII^e siècles" (*La musique arabe*, pp. 23–24). Later (p. 76) he describes the *nawba* in Near Eastern centers and admits that Ziriyāb gave it a new aspect.

Since the discovery of related new manuscripts and collections of *nawbāt* ascribed to al-Ḥā'ik, it has become clear that the whole question of his contribution as well as the more significant question of kinship between the Andalusian (i.e. North African) and Near Eastern traditions calls for serious re-examination. Some seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Near Eastern treatises contain descriptions of *nawbāt* of a form and nature similar to the Andalusian, as well as many parallel names of modes. A recent publication on the Tunisian *maqām* (Salah al-Mahdi, *Étude comparative des modes tunisiens* [Tunis, n.d.]) contains at least three parallels to the *shudūd* described by Ṣafī al-dīn: the *isfahān*, the *māyā*, and the *nawā*. We cannot yet determine the full nature of this kinship. It is clear, however, that in the thirteenth century three main modal systems seem to have coexisted: the old system of *aṣābi*^c (fingers), that of Ṣafī al-dīn, and the Andalusian. While the finger theory gave way little by little to Ṣafī al-dīn's system in the East, the Andalusian system survived in various North African centers.